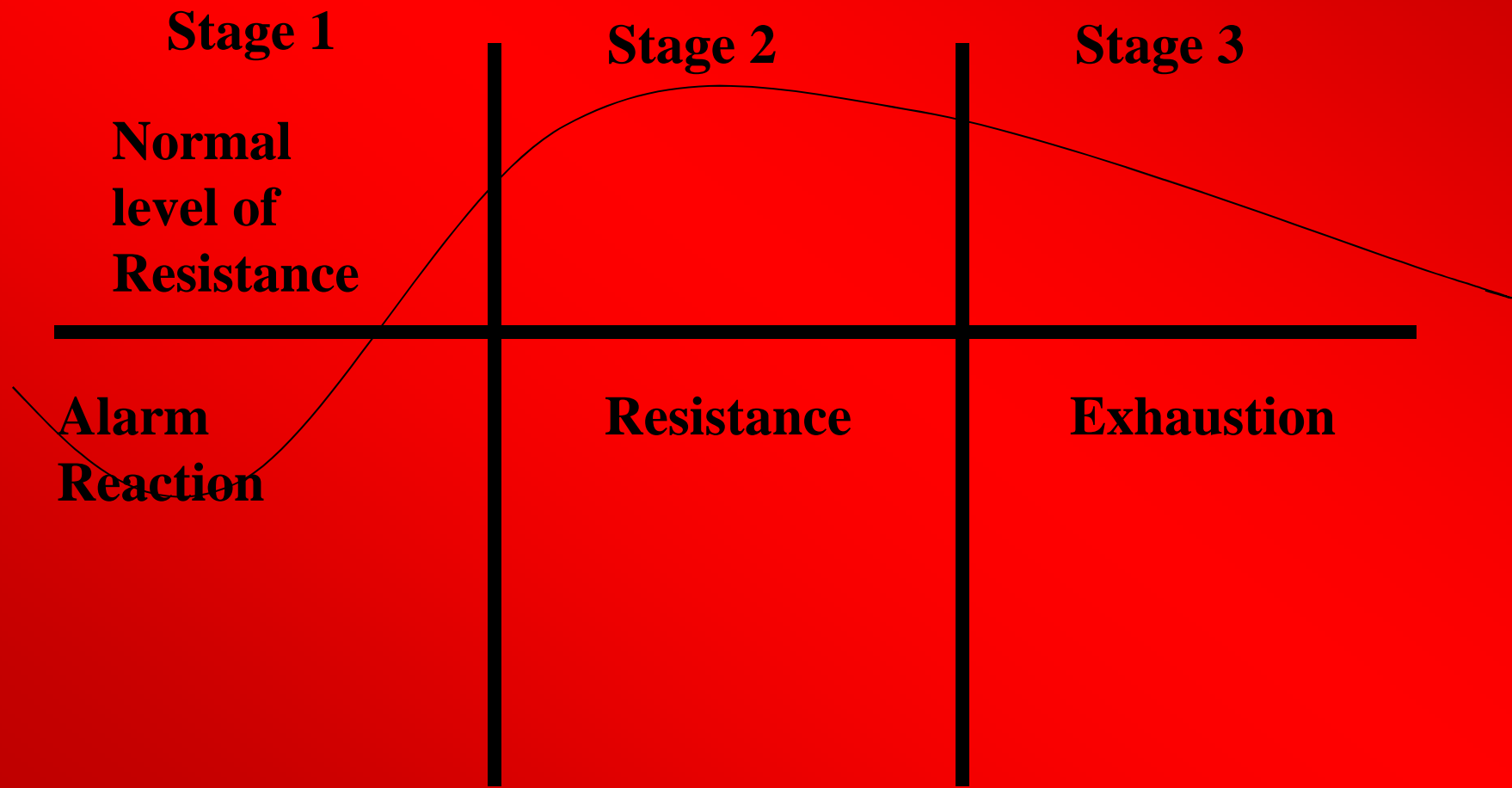


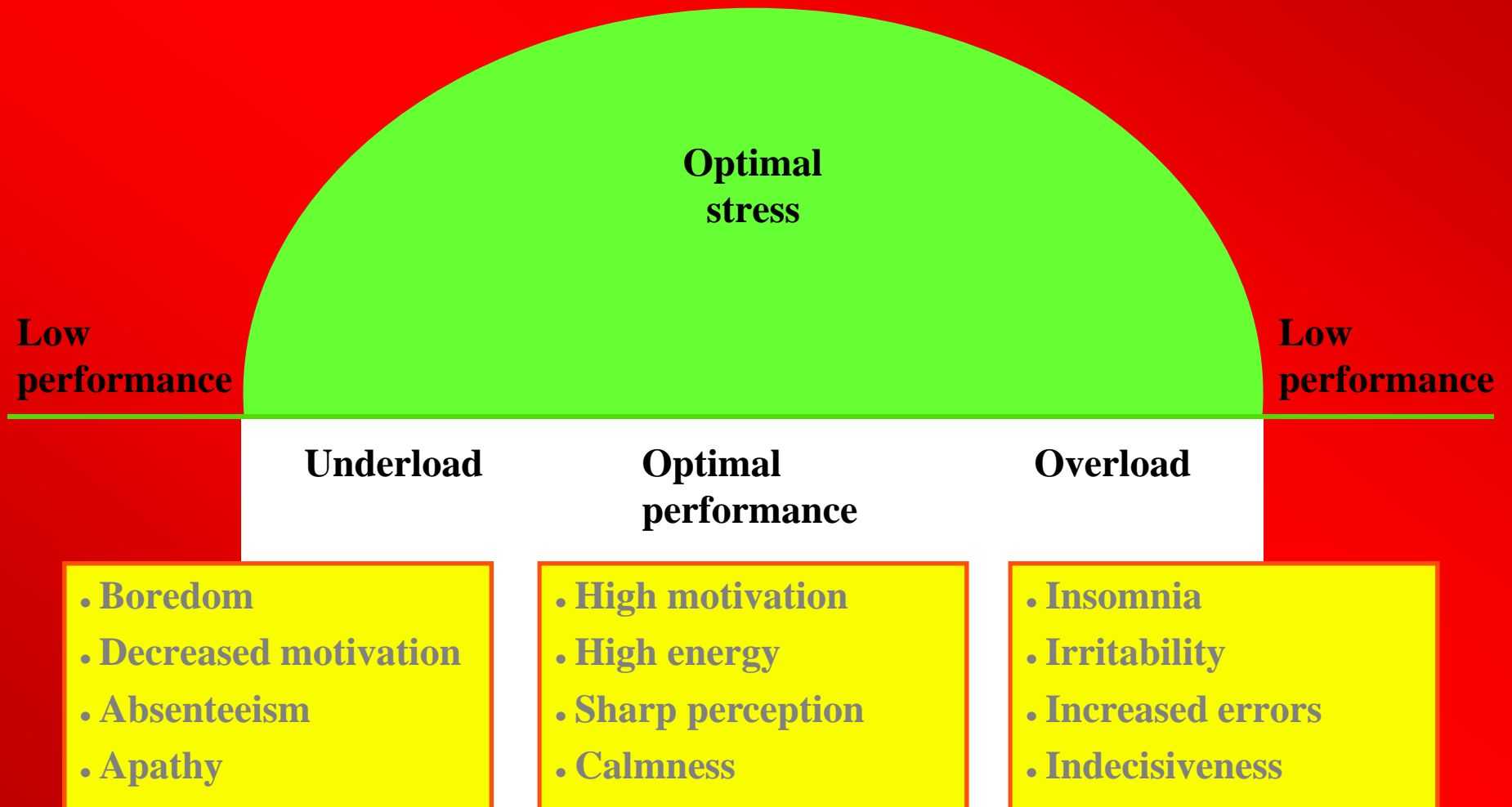
General Adaptation Syndrome



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The Underload Overload Continuum



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Social support

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What is social support?

- The perceived comfort, caring, esteem or help received from others.
- The existence or quantity of social relationships
- the amount of assistance individuals believe is available to them
- the amount of assistance individuals receive

Perceived Social Support

- Assessed based on people's perceptions of the different types of support various relationships provide
- Types of Social Support
 - Emotional support
expression of empathy, caring, concern
 - Belongingness support
Ability to talk to others

Perceived Social Support

- Types of Social Support (cont.)
 - **Tangible or instrumental support**
 - direct assistance, concrete assistance
 - **Informational/appraisal support**
 - advice, directions, suggestions, feedback
 - **Esteem/validation support – affirming self-worth**
 - expression of positive regard, encouragement, agreement
 - **Network support**
 - membership in a group

Social Support

- Most frequent forms of social support
 - Type of support received often depends on the circumstances.
 - Tend to receive more forms of support during stressful situations.
 - Emotional, informational, and esteem support occurred more frequently than tangible support.
 - Esteem support was associated with less depression

When does social support lead to better health?

- **Buffering hypothesis:** suggests that SS leads to better health by protecting people from the negative effects of high stress, and hence SS is particularly beneficial during stressful times
 - numerous studies suggest SS is particularly beneficial in terms of health for people undergoing high levels of stress: military in combat, AIDS patients, persons experiencing natural disasters
- SS allows people to think about difficult situations more positively
- SS allows people to cope more effectively

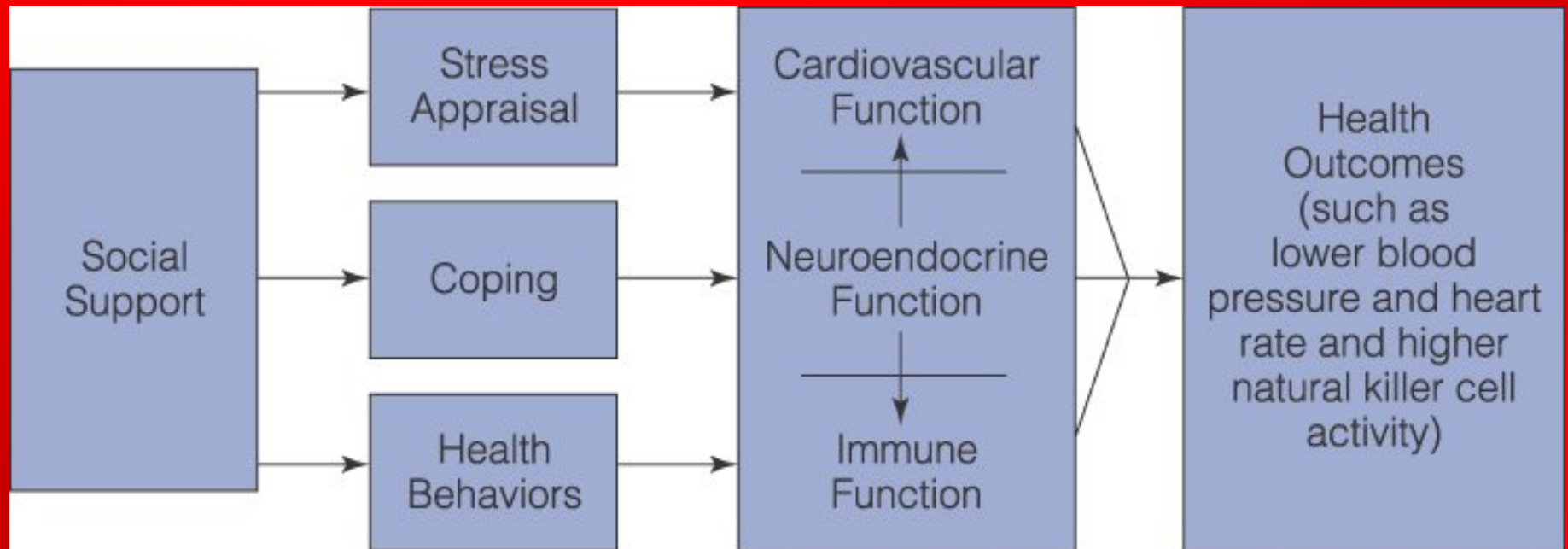
When does social support lead to better health (cont.)?

- **Direct effects hypothesis:** posits that SS can help people at both low and high levels of stress, and hence having high levels of SS is always advantageous to health
- Social relationships could influence their attitudes and behaviors related to health – like wearing seatbelts
 - encourage others to exercise, stop smoking, eat balanced diet
- Absence of social relationships leads to loneliness

Who benefits from what support?

- People in different situations benefit from having different types of support – **matching hypothesis** – **depends on type of problem**
 - in the case of controllable events (e.g., new parents,), people benefit from **practical support**
 - in the case of uncontrollable events (e.g., loss of spouse), people benefit from **emotional support**
 - Receiving social support from persons with similar problem has benefits –

How does social support lead to better health?



Does social support benefit men and women equally?

- Women more likely to have a close confidant
- Men have larger social networks but women use theirs more effectively.
- Women receive more support than men
- Women give more support than men
- Women benefit more psychologically and physically from SS

How can you increase social support?

- Factors affecting receiving support
 - Individual temperaments.
 - Need for social contact and affiliation.
 - Childhood experiences that develop skills to seek help.
- Children may be taught supportive skills such as talking nicely, sharing and taking turns.
- Attempt to form larger social networks
- Adults may receive social support from community organizations.
 - Self-help groups
 - Support groups
 - Participate in organized social support groups
- Employees and supportive bosses may influence social support in occupational settings.

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